UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/25509
1 April 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 31 MARCH 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to draw your attention to the tragic situation which has developed in the Kelbadjar district of the Azerbaijani Republic as a result of a large-scale attack by the army of the Republic of Armenia. The lives of 60,000 peaceful people are threatened.

The armed forces of Armenia, with their infantry and armoured vehicle units, invaded the territory of the Kelbadjar district of Azerbaijan. By the morning of 31 March they had occupied 12 villages in that district. In addition, some 30 villages and the whole northern part of the Lachin district are at present cut off. Tens of thousands of people were in the area which was encircled. Armenia's forces left no corridor through which the peaceful population could leave.

By 11 a.m. on the morning of 31 March, the advance units of the Armenian army were 16 kilometres from the district centre and, with the support of tanks and armoured personnel carriers, are continuing to move forward along the road towards the town of Kelbadjar, meeting no serious resistance. There is an immediate threat to the whole population of the district, numbering approximately 60,000 people. If the Armenian forces advance a further 2 to 4 kilometres they will cut the only road joining the Kelbadjar and Lachin districts of Azerbaijan to the outside world.

The town of Kelbadjar has for over twenty-four hours been subjected to massive artillery fire from the territory of Armenia. There have been many casualties among the peaceful population of the town, including women, old people and children. In the Azerbaijani villages occupied by the Armenian army - Agdaban, Chaigovushan, Charektar, Baglipeya, Vank, Aggaya, Merjimek, Narynjlar, Chyragly, Tazekend, Agjakend, Takhtabashi - eight people have been taken hostage and the fate of dozens of others is unknown.

The Armenian forces are also trying to assume the offensive against the town of Kelbadjar from the Vardenis district of Armenia and are subjecting the

frontier villages and towns of Azerbaijan to constant artillery and mortar fire. They are also using military helicopters and aircraft. Armenia's armed forces are continuing their attack also on the northern part of the neighbouring Lachin district of the Azerbaijani Republic.

The Government of the Azerbaijani Republic calls upon the whole world community to use all the means at its disposal to influence the high-handed aggressor and avert the deaths of tens of thousands of peaceful people in the Kelbadjar and Lachin districts of Azerbaijan.

I would request you to circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hassan HASSANOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative